

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS
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SUBJECT: POTENTIAL IMPACT OF SADAT'S ANTI-SOVIET STANCE

REF: A. CAIRO 9159
B. CAIRO 9182
C. CAIRO 9136

1. PRESIDENT SADAT'S SPEECH OF SEPT 15 (REFTELS)
WHICH REPEATED PATTERN OF PRESIDENTIAL CRITICISM
OF SOVIET UNION CONTINUES TO PERPLEX AND CONCERN
SOVIET AND EASTERN EUROPEAN DIPLOMATS HERE.
DEVELOPMENT AND USSR CHARGE HAS BEEN SEEKING TO
ASCERTAIN SADAT'S OBJECTIVES IN THIS CONTINUING ATTACK.
PROFESSING NOT TO UNDERSTAND TREATMENT BEING METED
OUT TO USSR, HE OBSERVED BITTERLY TO DCM THAT,
AFTER ALL, "SOVIET UNION IS NOT SIERRA LEONE." IT
HAS MADE SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION OVER LONG YEARS TO
MILITARY AND ECONOMIC CAPACITY TO EGYPT. MOREOVER,
HE CLAIMED, THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL SOVIET
OPPOSITION TO SECOND SINAI DISENGAGEMENT REGISTERED
IN SOVIET PRESS. IN FACT, NOTHING CRITICAL OF THE
AGREEMENT IS APPEARING AT ALL IN SOVIET PRESS, CITING LATEST
ISSUE OF PRAVDA AVAILABLE HERE (SEPT 15) AS EXAMPLE.

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HE ADMITTED, HOWEVER, POSSIBILITY OF REACTION TO

SADAT'S SPEECH APPEARING IN SUBSEQUENT ISSUES.

2. WHAT MUST BE VEXING TO SOVIETS IS THAT FAVORABLE POPULAR RECEPTION OF SADAT'S SPEECH SEEMS CLEAR AND EVIDENT. MINPET UNDERSEC RISKALLAH, WHO ALSO DOUBLES AS SIMULTANEOUS ENGLISH TRANSLATOR OF PRESIDENTIAL SPEECHES ON RADIO/TV DATING FROM NASSER'S TIME, FELT THAT SADAT'S INFORMAL, SOMEWHAT EMOTIONAL, SPEECH GAVE EXACTLY WHAT EGYPTIAN PEOPLE FEEL: A) ANNOYANCE AT PAST EFFORTS BY SOVIETS TO DOMINATE EGYPT, B) EXASPERATION WITH PALESTINIANS FOR WHOM EGYPT HAS SACRIFICED ITS MEN AND FINANCES AND C) ANNOYANCE WITH VAGARIES OF SYRIAN BAATHIST POLICIES.

3. ON OTHER HAND, SOME WESTERN DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS ARE BEGINNING TO QUESTION WISDOM OF WHAT SEEMS TO BE SADAT'S INTENTION OF USING SOVIETS AS "WHIPPING BOY." THEY SEE ADVANTAGE IN EGYPT'S DEVELOPING BALANCED POLICY BETWEEN US AND USSR. MOREOVER, THEY SEE DISTINCT DISADVANTAGE, WITH RESPECT TO FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARD ME PEACE, IN TOTALLY ALIENATING SOVIETS AND FORCING THEM AND SYRIANS, TOGETHER WITH PALESTINIANS, TO CONDUCT DIVISIVE ANTI-EGYPTIAN POLICY IN MIDDLE EAST. IN CONVERSATION WITH DCM SEPT 16, CANADIAN AMBASSADOR TOUCHETTE INDICATED SIMILAR CONCERNS HAD BEEN EXPRESSED TO HIM BY MFA MINSTATE MOHAMED RIAD, WHO QUESTIONED ADVISABILITY OF PRESIDENT'S CONTINUED ANTI-SOVIET DIATRIBE.

4. TOUCHETTE WONDERED WHETHER USG SHOULD NOT SEEK TO CONVINCE SADAT TO BRING A LITTLE BALANCE BACK INTO EGYPTIAN POLICY SO AS NOT TO PREJUDICE CHANCES FOR BROADENING AREA OF PROGRESS IN PEACE SETTLEMENT ACHIEVED BY EXCELLENT SECOND STEP IN SINAI.

5. COMMENT: SIMILAR VIEWS TO RIAD'S HAVE BEEN VOICED BY FAHMY AND HIS OTHER CLOSE MFA COLLABORATORS TO AMBASSADOR. FAHMY HAD LOOKED, WITHOUT SUCCESS, FOR WAYS SOMEHOW GIVE SOVIETS CHANCE OF PARTICIPATION -- WITHOUT THEIR DIRECT INVOLVEMENT--
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DURING RECENT DISENGAGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS. EGYPTIAN MILITARY, TOO, IS NOT IN FAVOR OF WIDENING DIVERGENCE BETWEEN EGYPT AND SOVIET POSITION WHICH COULD EFFECT EVEN MORE SERIOUSLY THEIR MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH USSR. DANGER EXISTS, AS WELL, THAT CONTINUED SHARPENING OF THIS ANTI-SOVIET ATTITUDE BY SADAT COULD LEAD TO DECISION BY USSR TO CUT OFF ALL ASSISTANCE TO

EGYPT, INCLUDING ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP UPON WHICH
SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF EGYPTIAN INDUSTRY IS STILL VERY DEPENDENT.
IN SUCH EVENT, SADAT CAN BE EXPECTED TO LOOK TO
USG TO COME TO EGYPTIAN RESCUE WHICH WOULD PRESENT
US WITH VARIETY OF DIFFICULT PROBLEMS. HE IS
ALREADY SENDING US SIGNALS TO THIS EFFECT.

6. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT ANY INTERVENTION ON
OUR PART, SUCH AS SUGGESTED BY CANADIAN AMBASSADOR,
WOULD BE APPROPRIATE.
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